

Magazine Feature Section



FROM MILLINERY TO Motion Pictures

V ALESKA SURATT, the girl who said she was just going to be an actress whether or no, made good her boast and became the whirlwind of vaudeville, registered in big theaters and big box-office receipts, and then stepped from the regular stage into the camera's focus and made a hit, again took to the speaking stage, but is now coming back into pictures with the Fox

Personality will nearly always find an outlet if it is sought for long enough, and the seeker has the energy and determination—the energy and ambition that made Valeska Suratt design striking and artistic headgear in the millinery department of the big store where she first worked, and earned her first \$5 a week. This was the same force that enabled her to conceive and execute striking situations on the stage.

The saleswoman who fits the hat on your head in the millinery shop you patronize, with the set and effect that you never can gain, is



corporation, and if she cares anything for the desire of thousands of film fans, she will stay there.

Valeska Suratt is an example of what personality will do when backed by ambition and energy. Little Valeska Suratt, when she was a child, made up her mind to go on the stage—and she went. She didn't go direct, of course. The road to fame is devious. The path this girl walked led first to Indianapolis, when she was 15 years old.

There she got her first position, that of apprentice in the millinery department of a store. The salary was not large, but Miss Suratt made good, just the same, and she, no doubt, would have registered just as surely as an artistic designer of hats as she has in the two branches of dramatic art. If the seeds of ambition had not kept growing and urging her on.

She went to Chicago, where, after a long time, she got her chance and stepped out for the first time in the white, bright light of the movie world.

Valeska Suratt is a real American girl, and despite the foreign and somewhat stately sound of her name, it is her own. She was born in Terre Haute, Ind.

When she made up her mind to make a place and name on the stage, she had no help but her own determination to win, an appetite for hard work and a consuming desire to make good.

She had personality in a large measure, a quality without which no one can hope for large success on the stage. It is doubtful if she realized that quality or gave it a name in the early days, but since then, however, she has made the most of this lucky possession.

There is much talk and conjecture about what are the ingredients that make for success on the stage or in the studio. Many believe that it is mere good looks. This is far from the truth; good looks help, in fact, they are absolutely necessary on the moving picture stage. In leading parts the heroine must invariably be beautiful or striking, but there is something more than good looks needed.

Artistic temperament and personality are really the ingredients of success, that and nothing else. The ability to see with the artist's vision—the ability to do and make and build the artist's brains. There must be individuality and the ability to express it—to put it over, as they say on the stage.

Miss Suratt possesses individuality to a large degree. She is herself, and as a striking "herself" she projects her personality to the audience she is entertaining to a large and satisfying degree, satisfying to the audience in entertainment, fame, and last, but not least, in dollars.

Where I look at myself I face the camera so that the audience gets a good look at me looking at myself, and when I turn my face and go toward the trunk Murphy hollered "cut" and they stopped the camera and made another scene where the extra stands in my place and pushes me in the trunk and looks me in, and it looks just like I had pushed myself in the trunk, and will fool everybody.

It was awful hot in that trunk, and pretty soon, when I was about smothered, I heard Murphy holler: "Where is Tom?" and I said, "I am in the trunk," and Lucy ran and opened the lid and threw a glass of water in my face, and pretty soon I was all right, and J. J. says:

"Did you go to sleep in there?" and I said: "No, I thought you was going to make that other scene where I am found in the trunk, and I would have to stay in there."

"What if we didn't take it till next week?" he says, "you could have got in again for that scene, couldn't you?"

But I never thought of that, and that's what

an artist, and no doubt, she were to transfer herself to the stage, she would win, just as Valeska Suratt has won, a bigger place in the world than the hat and furberling department will give her.

One actress whose name is a byword in the movies today uses two or three little tricks that are nothing more than her own personality speaking in her actions, which she has cultivated and studied and emphasized. If she is standing and talking to another person and uses her hands she will clasp them, hold them together, not them out toward the speaker in little, bird-like movements, and while they seem unconscious movements, they are studied and made the most of.

Another may have a manner of standing, or of crossing the room in a way that marks her and sets her apart from her sisters—that is individuality, which, if cultivated, will win success for her. These things have to be studied and cultivated and made the most of.

This girl has learned the value of expression; not because from some one else, but her own thoughts and feelings. She talks with an animated face, she gives sudden little turns of her head, sharp, little nods, now and then a bend of the face with wide-open and staring eyes.

This girl is not acting, she is just herself, but she has realized the value of individuality and has cultivated it to a high degree. She does the things that come natural to her, the things that she did as a child, but with an artistry that is studied, and only comes from a quick and perceptive mind and a long training.

LETTERS FROM A CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL ACTOR

By A. H. Giebler

DEAR DAVE—Well Dave, the next time you hear from me I will be working for another movie company. I am going to quit the Occidental Company because they don't know a good actor like me when they see one.

No movie actor that has acted for them as hard as I have, and made all them good pictures for them and got two girls like Lucy and Mabel to act for them, and run into a picnic where there was a lot of girls with nothing on but my nightshirt and stepped onto that pie and pulled off good comedy stuff the way I did, hadn't ought to be treated like I have been treated.

It looked like everything was going to be all right, and then everything was changed on account of that fat boob of an actor, Mercer Lansing. He thinks he is awful smart, but he is nothing but a smart elick. He is a Englishman and can't hardly talk our language. He calls the movies "the silent drama," and the way he says the word you would think he was talking about drawing some water out of the cistern, or maybe drawing a picture. And he don't drink nothing but tea, and Lucy is a little fool to get a whole dollar's worth of tea, which is only good for sick people and molly-coddles, so she can give him some when he comes to her ranch.

And when any one gets off a joke he calls it a wheeze. He got off one of his wheezes on me and if he gets off any more of them I am liable to up and bust him with something. You know me. We was talking about movie actors, and he said, "Do you know, Mr. Boggs, that you put me in mind of one of your celebrated silent actors?"

I thought he must mean Francis X. Bushman or maybe Henry B. Walthall, and I asked him which one of them it was, and he said: "Well, to tell you the truth, you remind me of both of them."

I asked him why I reminded him of them, and he said:

"Because you are so different." "I couldn't see anything funny about that, can you Dave? I guess it is just one of them English jokes that nobody don't understand but an Englishman that drinks tea, but they all laughed and thought it was a good joke, but it is because they are all stuck on him on account

of him owning an automobile. I says: "You think you are awfully smart, don't you?" and he seen that I was mad and didn't get off any more of them jokes on me.

We started making them double exposure pictures yesterday, and it is the funniest kind of acting I ever done. I am supposed to have a brother that looks so much like me you can't tell us apart, and he is a crook and I am a detective, and I have to play both parts.

I told J. J. Murphy I didn't like to play no crook parts, because the people in the shows don't never like the villains, and he said that playing a comedy crook isn't like the villain that is all the time stealing the papers, or tying the girl on the railroad track so the train will run over her, and that audiences love anybody that will make them laugh.

I said that was all right but it looked to me like if I was going to play two parts I ought to get more pay, and he said, "You will be lucky to get any pay if things don't pick up with us and we don't get a better outlet for our films than we've got."

So you see I won't be losing much if I do quit this company, which I will if they don't treat me better.

We started in to practice the scenes, and J. J. asked me if I understood double exposure, and I said yes, because it don't do to say you don't know anything that way. I did know a good deal about it, and I give Bennie Steinbush some cigars and he told me some more. I told him to tell me right, and he said:

"Tommy, you pain me. Ain't we friends? Far be it from me to tell a friend like you something wrong."

This is the way out of it, Dave. You come to the scene from one side and act on one side of the camera, and the other side is masked, and then you go over on the other side of the scene and work out the other part, and the other side is masked, and when the film is developed it shows you in two places, like you was talking to yourself.

The first scene was where I have to shoot myself, and I come in the scene and acted like I was mad. I pointed my finger and said, "hold up your hands." And J. J. said to shoot, and I pulled out my gun and shot at the wall, and then I run over on the other side of the scene and fell over like I was shot; and everybody hollered and laughed, and I thought it was because I was acting so good; but they was laughing at me, and I told them they hadn't ought to laugh at a solemn scene where a man is shot.

J. J. says: "Tom, you get worse all the time,"

and then that fat actor said he had an idea, and I said: "Does it hurt your head?" just to show him I could get off some of them wheezes, too. If I wanted to, as well as he could.

And he told J. J. it would be a good thing to write a scenario about an amateur actor and show how he tries to act, and all the time makes mistakes, and Mabel says:

"Put me and Tom in as stars; I guess he and I know less about acting than any two people drawing salaries."

But J. J. thought up another way to fix the play, and it is a bum way; it gives that fat boob all the good work to do. Him and Flora, the fat girl that was working in Mr. Crossland's company, is going to work with us and be his wife, and they will be in front of the camera all the time. They will be two fat ones together, and there won't be any room for anybody else when they get there, and he ain't never done no movie acting at all, and he will find out it ain't so easy. He is just a camera louse, Dave, that's what they call actors that want to be in the picture all the time, in the movies.

J. J. Murphy stayed up all night writing the scenario over so I wouldn't have no good part in the play, and that is the reason why I am going to quit and go with some bigger company, that don't go crazy over no fat boob that drinks tea and can't hardly talk our language, and says cawnt for can't. He'll be saying awnt for aint some of these days.

I guess I'll stay until they get this picture finished, because I don't want to quit and bust them up, maybe, and cause Mabel and Lucy to lose their jobs on my account, but as soon as it is finished I will say good-bye.

We made some of them scenes the new way. I am still going to be Tin Star Tom, the detective. That fat boob is a rich man that has got lots of money, and Flora is his wife, and they get me for a detective to follow them around to see that they don't get robbed or anything like that, and there is another man that is a crook just like me when I am my brother.

He dresses up to make himself look like the fat boob, and I can't tell them apart. I am my own brother, and we can't tell ourselves apart, and when I play my brother the crook, I make them believe I am the detective and get in their room, and before this I have to tie myself and be shot up in a big trunk, and when I get out the fat crook has got me and locks me up in a closet, and I come in and arrest the fat one for the crook, and the crooked fat one gets away with me money, and I put

you get out here, Dave, when you try to act the best you know how, somebody hollers at you and says "hell-fire," like J. J. is always saying.

And that fat boob says: "It seems our young friend who wanted to send me for the film studio has a bit to learn about the silent drama himself."

I just give him a look and said:

"I guess you want somebody to give you a cup of tea, don't you?" and he never said nothing more.

Lucy and Mabel are going to be his daughters in the play, and he has to kiss them a lot every time he goes away somewhere, and I told Lucy that wasn't the way folks did; they didn't kiss their girls every time they turned around, and I said:

"Your pa don't kiss you every time he goes out of the house, does he?"

She said: "No, but this is a comedy, and is to give the crook that looks like the rich man a chance to kiss us a lot," and he plays both of them parts, which ought to have been my part, as I am the star.

Lucy said: "Do you want me to tell Mabel not stand for it? I will if you say so, because I am jealous of her, you know. I have got plans on that big automobile and them diamonds Mr. Lansing wears."

Ain't it funny, Dave, how a girl will get stuck on somebody that is fat and not a bit good looking, just because he has got an automobile, and maybe them diamonds are made out of glass or alum, and would melt if they got out in the rain.

I am going to get an automobile as soon as I get enough money saved up. Lots of the movie actors have got one. One actor has got an automobile that is painted white, but mine will be painted red with my name on the sides, and when Lucy and Mabel sees me going by in it they will wish they had not married a big fat slob that will take nearly all the room in an automobile, and don't drink nothing but tea, and is a molly-coddle.

I bet if he was to drink two or three of them stingers down at Jake's place he would

get tight and fall all over himself. He don't know anything about them, because Bennie Steinbush says they don't never drink anything but tea in London. Maybe me and Bennie will get him to go down there and drink a lot of them stuff, and have some fun out of him.

Well, good-bye, Dave, I will tell you where I am working the next time I write if I quit this company.

TOM.

ANSWERS TO MOVIE FANS.

BETTIE—Francis Ford and Grace Cunard are

not married to each other, but they are both working in Peg o' the Ring.

J. A. P.—Irving Cummings is now in vaudeville, but his last studio address was the Horsley studio, Los Angeles, Cal.

AN INTERESTING FAN—Thomas Chatterton and William Russell are both with the American Film Company at Santa Barbara, Cal. Chatterton is playing lead in the new American serial, The Secret of the Submarine.

DOT—Jack Dean, her husband in real life, played opposite Fannie Ward in Tennessee's Pardner. The film has been, or else will be, shown in all theaters using Paramount pictures. Charles Clary is a large man, 5 feet 1 in height, and weighs 195 pounds. He has dark hair and hazel eyes, and has been in moving pictures for something like five years. His first big hit was in The Rosary, a Sell feature.

PAULA—Edward Coxen is with the American Film Company, 6227 Broadway, Chicago, Ill. His latest play is Pierre Brissac him. Braven, and Lizette Thorne plays opposite him.

CURIOUS KITTY—Jack Pickford will not be in until the coming 18th of August. Mary Pickford will next be seen in a Dutch play called Hulda from Holland. Marguerite Clarke is under a long contract to play in Famous Players features, so there is no telling just when, if ever, she will return to the regular stage. Wildflower was the first film in which she appeared, but she has been in a number of photoplays since.